

(1)

A  
LETTER  
TO  
A. H. Esq;  
Concerning the  
STAGE.

---

---

L O N D O N,

Printed for *A. Baldwin*, near the *Oxford-Arms* in *Warwick-Lane*, 1698.

LETTER

TO

A. H. ELLIS

STATES



be ask'd, Cou'd he not have done that without exposing so many great *Genius's*? Had it not been better to have let Mr. *Dursey* alone? Tho' even this Method wou'd not have pleas'd every body; for whate'er Effect it has had on Mr. *Vanbroug* and *Congreve*; *Motteux* and *Guildon* resent it to the last degree. Is their nothing in their Works Illustrious, or that cou'd merit Censure? Indeed some People are not to be reclaim'd by Ridicule; and Mr. *Collier* knowing their Vertues, with how much Compos'dness and Resignation they can bear a Hiss, out of Compassion, took Example by the Town and neglected both.

It is the Observation of some, That where-ever the State flourishes, the Theatre has never fail'd of Encouragement; and that 'tis hardly possible the State shou'd suffer without the others sinking in its Reputation. It is Pity that *England* shou'd be the only Exception, and since we have some of our Nobility, who have a Taste of Eloquence, and all those Vertues which adorn the Stage, that It shou'd want their Assistance by whom it was at first rais'd, and since maintain'd; If it has fallen from its Purity, or never arriv'd to what they fully lik'd, let it not want their Countenance, without whom 'tis impossible to be any thing at all, and by whom it may become all that we can wish. They alone can free it from Contempt and Censure, by maintaining such an Awe, that the least Glymps of Prophaneness and Immorality shou'd not dare to appear on  
the



the Stage; and this may be done by encouraging none but those who write well: for when a good Poet takes on him to instruct, we need fear no Immodesty; for 'tis impossible in a Regular Play, he should find room for an Indecency. I know you'll ask, Why should I appear so zealous in desiring the Favour of the Nobility for what is deny'd to be lawful; and that I ought not to with an Encouragement of the Stage, when 'tis affirm'd that from Thence we derive our Corruption of Manners. Mr. Collier has endeavour'd to prove this from the Looseness of some of our Plays, and then has brought the Opinion of the Fathers to condemn the Theatre in general.

As to the *First Objection*, *That the Debauchery of the Town is to be attributed to the Looseness of our Plays and Stage.*

If this were true, it is an Objection only against the present Corruption of the Theatre; and is of no force against a regulated Stage; for that admits of nothing Immodest or Immoral.

As to the *Second Objection* brought from Councils and Fathers, if what is quoted were really design'd by them against the Theatre in general, yet it can have but little effect with the People, I mean the Men of Probity and Learning; for they are not to be mov'd by the Opinions of others no longer than those Opinions are agreeable to Reason: No Man ought to pay such a Respect either to Councils or Fathers, as to submit his judgment

contrary to his Reason. Their saying so in this Case ought to have no more effect with us than if they had at the same time given us their Opinion of the Truth of *Transubstantiation*.

I think the Matter ought to be disputed by it self; for the Opinion of the Fathers cannot alter the Nature of the Thing. Sir, give me leave to make this Digression: 'Tis my Opinion, even in Matters of Religion, the preaching up the Fathers so much has been of fatal Consequence. If we run out of our selves to search for Truth, we are expos'd to be deceiv'd; and relying too much upon another's Judgment, may be the occasion of an Errour in our own. A false Quotation or Interpretation by a Man of some Figure, to an easie Credulous Bigot, has been the Conversion of a great many, and of excellent Service in the Church of *Rome*: They cannot attack any without a Father or Council, and that to a Person who knows nothing of the matter, is as good as a Demonstration. The Fathers were but Men, and as capable to be deceiv'd as others: And I do not know why the Bishop of *Worcester* may not deserve an equal Esteem; he understands the Languages, and has as much Sincerity as any of them; and why then shou'd he not be able to give the Sense of the Scripture as well.

I have a Veneration for them as good Men, and where their Opinion is a Consequent of true Reason, it ought to be embraced; but where 'tis not

not, I need not say it ought to be rejected; and I think any Man may be allowed to dispute whether it be so or no. The Bishop of Worcester cannot publish a Book, but you'll have an Answer to it. It would indeed be of Reputation to the Councils and Fathers, some of them at least, if what were objected against them were of no more force. His Philosophy is too rational to be weak'ned by Sophistry; his Divinity too solid to be shook by Heresie: He seems to have been predestinated to Glory, and the appointed Instrument to deliver us from Popery, Atheism, Deism, and Socinianism, with all those spurious Sectaries which have been spawned into the World: What can resist the Power of his Arguments? And who is able to abide his Force. But to return, I think the Controversie, in short, is this:

*Whether the Allowance of a Theatre in a Christian Country, is consisting with the Christian Religion.*

The Answer to this Question may be this:

That whatever is approved by lawful Authority, and is not against any positive revealed Law of God, is consisting with the Christian Religion.

Now it lies upon the Adversaries of the Stage to prove, That the Theatre is against Law or Scripture.

'Tis

'Tis unfair to take the advantage of the present Corruptions, and cry down the Stage, because Men make an ill use of it. The Priests won't allow this Argument in another Case; and I think an ill Poet is no more an Objection against the Stage, than a Clergyman's being a Blockhead, is to the Pulpit. 'Tis our Misfortune to have too many in both Vocations; tho', as bad as the Stage is, I don't doubt but the World has receiv'd a great many Advantages from it. I shall name you some, and the first may be the reclaiming the Manners of the Clergy.

'Tis certain, since the Stage has used the Gown freely, and the Laity have not been afraid to look into their Faults, that they are more humble, and less publickly vicious: They know if *Tom Durfey* can light upon a frail Priest, he won't scruple to expose his Infirmities, tho' he is not the only *Whipping Tom* of the Stage; if they had not others to fear, they wou'd soon grow too many for him. I believe they wou'd be angry, if they thought the People gave the Honour of their Reformation to the Stage; tho' you can't believe otherwise, if you consider the difference of the former and present Clergy, what a strange alteration there is where the Knowledge of Plays have come (I wou'd be understood only of those who need'd a Reformation) There are now, and have always been, Men among them able and fit to give Laws, and from whom the World was glad to receive them, who appear'd as burning

ing and shining Lights in their Generation; and it was from them we learnt the difference; it was their Light which expos'd the other, and the Stage only took their evil Deeds, to shew them truly the Evils of them. But besides their Reforming of Manners, the Stage has taught them to speak English, and preach more like Ambassadors of their great Master. It has taught them to argue rationally, and at once mended their Style, and Form of their Sermons. How did Religion labour under heavy Language, and how many People rather absented the Church, than come to hear the Word of God Burlesqu'd? In what a ridiculous Dress did Religion appear? When to spin out the time in old Proverbs, and wretched Puns, a Fellow would run it up to *Six and thirtiethly*, before he came to his *Use and Applications*. In short, the Drunkenness, Whoring, Insolence, and Dulness that has appear'd under a Black Coat on the Stage, have made the Men of the same Colour of it keep within Bounds: And that a Man might not teize them with the Representation, they have endeavour'd to appear in as differing a Form as possible.

If what Mr. *Collier* says was true, That when a Clergyman is brought on the Stage, it is with a design to ridicule the Function, it would be abominable, and as bad as the Town is, would be hiss'd off the Stage. I dare say, whatever the Intention of the Poet is, 'tis not receiv'd so by the Audience. For at this rate, every foolish Peer who is brought on the Stage, must  
be

be suppos'd to intend a Reflection on all the Men of Condition ; and an Alderman, who is a Cuckold, must be look'd on as the Representative of his Brethren. 'Tis absurd to make no distinction ; as if a particular Vice in a particular Man, cou'd not be expos'd without a design'd Reflection on all who belong to him. It ought to touch no body but whom it concerns ; and it has its end, if it reclaims where it was design'd, and prevents others, by shewing the Danger : And this is the Design of Comedy. But the Question is, Whether our Poets have managed it as they ought ? Whether they have not pick'd out a particular Person, and expos'd the Character in general, under the Notion of one Man ? I answer to this, That whatever the Design of the Poet has been, it has not had the effect with the People : For who disbelieves the Authority of their Function, or thinks the worse of Good, Learned, and Ingenious Men among them ? Are not the Religious very much reverenc'd ? Has any Body thought the worse of *Stillingfleet*, *Tillotson*, and *Burnet*, upon this Account ? Who can believe, that when *Mr. Vanbrong* disguises a Parson, that he thought of these Men, or any who lives soberly, and makes Religion their Business, and at the same time, don't make it inconsistent with good Manners ? The Good among them know the People love them, and that nothing but their own misbehaviour draws them into Contempt. Any Minister, tho' he was but of mean Understanding, yet if he had other good Qualities, if he liv'd  
soberly



soberly, and did his Duty religiously, that ever such a Man was pickt out to be the Scandal of his Neighbours, or a Ridicule of the Stage. Whence is it then, that the Clergy are so angry? If you hook but one of them, all the rest are upon your Back, and you can't expose his Vices without being an Enemy to the Church: And in this, *Priests of all Religions are the same.*

But after all, why shou'd Mr. Collier blame Mr. Dryden for making Dorax exclaim against the Mahometan Priest? Or how can that be a Prejudice to the Character of the Christian Clergy? Is it not natural for such a one as Dorax to say as much, and especially against such a one as the *Musli* in the Play? And does Mr. Collier blame Mr. Dryden for writing naturally? I think it is a Fault throughout Mr. Collier's Book, that in his Criticisms of the Plays, he never considers the Person who speaks; that is, Whether 'tis not natural for a Man of such a Character, to say such a thing? It wou'd have been of more Service to have proved, That no Person is to be brought on the Stage to say an ill thing, and then he had thrown away all the Profaneness, which is so much an Offence, at once. But if such Persons are to be represented, there is not so much Reason against any of our present Plays, as is urg'd by Mr. Collier; for you must allow a Coquett to talk like her self, a Lover to vent his Passion in Raptures, and a Rake to speak the Language of the Town.

I have, already told you, That I am far from vindicating the present Stage. I don't know a regular Play, or that ought to be represented on a regular Stage ; yet I know a great many Plays that I would not loose for want of that Regularity. Who wou'd not have Sir *G. Ethelridge*, Mr. *Wicherly*, and even some of Mr. *Dryden's* Plays ? Who would reject the *Orphan*, because Mr. *Collier* objects against a loose Speech in it.

But Mr. *Collier* has laid other things to the Poet's Charge besides the Abuse of the Clergy ; and that the profane Characters in the Play, has had an ill Effect on the Age, by promoting of Immorality and Vice. This I very much question ; for I can't apprehend so much danger even in the present Stage as Mr. *Collier* wou'd suggest. The greatest Faults of our Plays are their being generally, in one part or other, unnatural : That which is regular in any of them can never be an Offence ; and where that Monster appears, it rather frightens than allures ; so that we are not in so much danger, even from our very bad Plays : For the more monstrous, the less Power it has to please ; and whatever looses the Power, can never do much damage. So that if Mr. *Collier* should make a Collection of *D'ursey's* Works, who is there that wou'd become a Convert ? And who wou'd turn Parson to be drunk and beat the Watch ? Or who wou'd be proud of an Imitation of any of his Heroes ? Has any Body brought themselves under his Character, in hopes to recommend

mend them to the World ? It would be happy if the World had learnt no more Irreligion from the Pulpit than it has from the Stage ; at least, the Consequence of the first has been more fatal. What dismal Effect has the holy Cant had upon the Multitude : What Rebellion, Blood-shed and Mischief have been encourag'd under the Name of *Sanctity, Religion, and the Good old Cause*. Whoever learnt to cut a King's Throat by seeing of Plays ? But by going to Church, the People were instructed to *bind the King in Chains, and his Nobles in Fetters of Iron, That the Kingdom ought to be taken away, and given to the Saints* ; And who would not be a Saint for such an Inheritance ? Who could refuse resisting of Authority, when instead of *Damnation*, it was *coming forth to the Help of the Lord against the Mighty* ? But this is but one Mischief of the Pulpit ; this is only putting a Kingdom in Civil Broils, intestine Wars, and unnatural Murthers. But when Men of debauch'd Principles shall become the Teachers of the Nation, what may we not expect from their Industry and Sedition.

After all, my Lord *Foppington* was never design'd to teach People to speak or act like him ; nor was it intended that the Ladies should be byass'd by the Example of *Berinthia* to turn Coquetts. These and the like Characters in other Plays, are not propos'd as a Direction for the *Gallant Man*, or the *Vertuous Lady* ; but that seeing how such Persons behave themselves on

the Stage, that they may not make the like Figure in the World: but if any body shou'd rather be in love than terrified by these Examples, 'tis their Fault, and not the Poets, since the best things are liable to Corruptions. But it may be objected, That our Poets don't make Persons speak like themselves. That indeed is a Fault, and I can't say any thing to excuse it but this; That they who have the Judgment to know when a Poet speaks improperly, ought to have so much Judgment, as not to be byass'd by his Irregularities: The People who don't understand it, generally suppose, that what is Vertuous is to be imitated, and what is Vicious is to be avoided. That this is the general Observation of those who frequent Plays, may justly be inferr'd from the Practice of the Town: For I challenge any Man to prove, That any one Vice, now in being, took its Rise from the Stage. The Stage takes Examples from the Town. The Scene must be really acted in the World before it comes to be expos'd: So that whatever appears Vicious or Ridiculous, is owing to the Wickedness of the Times, and not to the Theatre. It may be objected, That what is generally acted on the Stage, if it was done before, yet it was done in private; but the Stage publishes it. To this I answer, That it does not intend to license it, only to set it in a true Light, that it may be expos'd and shunn'd.

As to those Objections, That the Actors are generally debauch'd, and of lewd Conversation; and that no Person who is a known Adulterer,

Adulterer, or Profane, ought to be encouraged: That the Play-house is a Resort of vicious Persons, and gives Opportunity to such who have wicked Inclinations. All these wou'd fall upon the advancement of a regular Stage; but as 'tis, the Objections are not levell'd Right; for the State is chargeable with the Immoralities. There are Laws for the Punishment of Vice; and if the Magistrate neglect his Duty, he must answer for it. I don't know that any body is oblig'd to a Conversation with the Players; and their Lives can influence only their Associates; and such they wou'd find, whether they are Players or not. When they are on the Stage they are confin'd to the Poets Language: And if we shou'd see Mr. *Powel* acting a Brave, Generous and Honest Part; or Mrs. *Knight*, a very Modest and Chaste one, it ought not to give us Offence; because we are not to consider what they are off the Stage, but whom they represent: We are to do by them as in Religion we do by the Priest, mind what they say, and not what they do. Tho' the Stage is not so abandon'd but that there are some Honest and Vertuous, for any thing the Town can say to the contrary. And I wou'd leave it to themselves, whether they don't find their Account in it; whether the Town is not more favourable on any Occasion; so that it ought to be an Encouragement to persist in their Vertue.

The Objection against the Play-House it self, because it gives Opportunities for Wickedness, is so trifling, it is hardly worth answering; for  
 they

they who are viciously inclin'd will find an Opportunity ; and as long as the Toleration-Act is in force, there is never a Meeting in Town but will afford extraordinary Hints of that kind ; the Morning and Evening Lectures are precious Seasons ; Mr. *Doelittle* may thresh his Heart out, there will be Tares among the Wheat ; and those Houses are haunted with a sort of Spirits that are not to be cast out with Prayer and Fasting.

I think from the little I have said, it is certain the Town has not been debauch'd by the Stage, and that 'tis much easier to demonstrate the Good, than prove the Evil Effect even of our bad Plays. I have shew'd that there has been a Virtue in them ; and we might very well pardon them if it were only for that one Benefit, of being so serviceable to the reclaiming of the Clergy. If they can give me an Instance of any Play whose Vices have had so ill Effect with the People as to counter-balance the Good it has wrought in them, I shou'd set my self against the Stage too ; but then as to other Advantages which we have receiv'd from the Plays of the first Rank, we are certainly very much in debt to them. The Refinement of our Tongue is principally owing to them ; Good Manners and good Conversation is owing to our Comedy ; and I don't doubt but some of our Tragedies have fired some with a Greatness of Spirit, and taught to act the Hero with Prudence, Virtue and Courage.

I shall conclude this part of my Letter with this Observation, that if the present Stage has  
not



not been so terrible an Enemy to Christianity, but on the contrary, has afforded a great deal of good to the World; that a Regulated Stage wou'd be of infinite Service to the Nation.

I have propos'd it as an Argument in Defence of a Regular Stage, that it lies on its Adversaries to prove it against Law or Scripture, and so might leave it justify'd till some Person or other make the Discovery to the World: But because 'tis my Opinion 'tis utterly impossible, I shall give you some Reasons why I think it not only lawful in it self, but very necessary in this populous City. And, First, if we consider the Matter that ought to be represented, whether it be Tragedy or Comedy; there is nothing in either that can offend Religion or Good Manners.

Tragedy is a Representation of an Action by some Great Man, teaching us to regulate our Passions with exactness, and by shewing the strange and differing Accidents of Life, to which the most important Persons are subject; proving to us that Vice never goes unpunished; and that true Happiness does not chiefly consist in the Enjoyment of this World.

Comedy is a Representation of common Conversation; and its Design is to represent things Natural; to shew the Faults of Particular Men in order to correct the Faults of the Publick, and to amend the People thro' a fear of being expos'd, with this Observation, That the Ridiculous

culous of the Stage is to be only a Copy of the Ridiculous found in Nature.

- In short, 'tis the Property both of Tragedy and Comedy to instruct: The Characters in both are to be Natural; and the Persons concern'd in the whole Action, are to be such whose Vertues ought to provoke us to an Emulation, or whose Vices ought to deter us from imitating their Example. The Language and Sentiments are to be suitable to each Character: A Wise, Good, and Great Man is to say nothing but what is natural for such a one to say: The Gallant Man is to appear with all the Qualities of a Man of Honour: and the Fool in his proper colour'd Coat. The Vices of the Wicked are not to be represented so nicely, as punish'd severely; that is, a Vicious Person is not to be allow'd to plead in favour of his Vices, or to represent his Villany so calmly as to tempt any Man to try Practices in another Place. Vice is only to be brought there to be condemn'd; and the reason of this is, that our Terrour may be excited, and all our Passions vent themselves with Strength and Reason. Our Pity is not to be extended in a wrong place. In short, The Disposition of the Play is to be such that all the Characters have a proper Effect with us. Our Fear, Love, and Anger are to be exerted with Justice; and we are to learn from a just Fable how to behave our selves in earnest. Thus may we exercise our Souls by examining our reasonable Faculties, and try how we can love to extremity,

tremity, and yet without a Fault; to be angry and sin not; to be just without partiality, and rejoyce with them that rejoyce. We are there instructed to Love, Hate, and Fear within measure, how we may be Men without debasing our Souls; and all this by moving Examples, which in spite of Stubbornness, will force its Impressions; and 'tis our own Fault if they are not lasting. This certainly must recommend the Stage to the Vertuous; and Piety can't be offended at the decent reproving of Vice, and the insinuating recommendation of Vertue. Here we find Morality urg'd by Precept and Example, and the Stage reprehending those Follies which the Pulpit wou'd blush to correct; for tho' the Church is the Place to declaim against Sin, yet there are some sorts of Wickedness which can't be so decently reprov'd there; so that the Stage is serviceable on this account, to supply the Defects of the Pulpit. In short, whatever may be objected against the present management of the Stage, is of no force against such Proceedings as these. Religion and Morality can receive no Damage here; for as long as these Rules are observ'd, they strictly include both.

It was the Opinion of a great Master of Reason, that Tragedy conduces more to the Instruction of Mankind, than even Philosophy it self, because it teaches the Mind by Sense, and rectifies the Passions by the Passions themselves. And there is this further Advan-

tage, that we have always the Example of great Men before us, and are generally inclinable to take our Manners from them. There has indeed Authorities been produc'd against the Stage, tho' there don't want as ancient Advocates for it; and some of the Fathers themselves writ Plays, however Mr. *Collier* came to forget it.

If the Theatre is capable to give us such Advantage, it will easily be prov'd of what necessity there is for its encouragement in this Populous City: If there were no Politick Reasons, yet the Good to Religion that may be done by it, is a convincing Argument at once for its Lawfulness and Use. I know the Gravity of some can't dispense with so much time to be spent in Diversion; tho' I can't think this a reasonable Objection where so much Profit may attend our Delight. If it be lawful to recreate our selves at all, it can never be a misse to frequent such a Diversion, that only takes up our Time to make us wiser. I wou'd to God all of them were directed to the same End. No Man is to employ himself so as to exclude the Duties of Religion; and there is as much danger in minding too much the Business of the World, as the Pleasures of it; both of them are to be kept within bounds, and both subservient to Religion. The Passions of Men are active and restless; and 'tis the Prudence of every State to encourage some publick Exercise to keep them at quiet. If the Theatre was down, the Churches wou'd not be the fuller for't.

Or

Or if they shou'd, Religion is not always the design of them who come there; so that I cannot see that any thing can be allow'd for the publick Diversion with so much Innocence and so much Advantage. I'm only afraid that such a Regularity wou'd be too Vertuous for the Age; and I don't doubt but the Beaux and Poëtasters wou'd be full of Exclamation: For it wou'd be a dreadful Time if the Ladies should regard the Play more than their Beaux Airs; and how wou'd *Vanbroug* be able to pass a Comedy on them, if they shou'd once be so nice in their Taste as to disgust Obscenity; this indeed wou'd be a Vexation, and such a Delicacy which Mr. *Congreve* cou'd not be pleas'd with: And if the Town shou'd be so refin'd to admit of nothing but what is Natural, we can't expect that ever he will gratifie us with another Tragedy. *Durfey* and *Mottoux* wou'd write no more Farces; *Guildon* and *Tom. Brown*, &c. wou'd be the Saints with wry Mouthes and scrue'd Faces: Mr. *Guildon* indeed has Philosophy enough to support himself under such a Calamity, and knows a Method to prevent starving; for who can think that he who writ *Blunt's* Life can be at a loss for a decent dispatch of his own? 'Tis a deplorable Case, indeed, and I pity a Man who cannot get Bread by Writing, and yet must beg or starve without it.

The Prince of *Conti* believ'd the *French* Stage wou'd not have been so bad if the Priests had begun sooner to declaim against it: It is possible that some of our Defects may be owing to such

such a Negligence. However 'tis never too late to mend ; and since Mr. *Collier* has took up the Cudgels, I wish the rest of the same Coat wou'd so far as is just and reasonable, stand his Second : He has his Faults, but they are such as I wou'd not have lost his Book for. I know there are some violent Wits, who will not allow him either Wit or Style, but, in plain terms, to be a Fool. I hope none of them will go about to prove it. I confess he has kept ill Company of late ; but surely they don't ground a Conjecture upon that, especially when a Man only converses to convince. The naming Mr. *Durfey*, or examining his Works, is not so contagious as to stain a Man's Reputation. We are indeed to answer for evil Communication ; and tho' I cannot justify a Man who wou'd read Mr. *Durfey* with too much Delight, because we must not set our Affection on things below, yet I wou'd pardon any who wou'd read him only to forewarm others of the Danger.

'Tis a Misfortune to have good Poets stand in need of Assistance ; but 'tis very much aggravated when they are deny'd it. A Man who is oblig'd to write for his Bread, is forc'd to be very hasty to prevent starving ; And every Man's Genius is not so sharp as his Appetite. This may be one Reason we have so many things appear Abortive. Some Poets have not so much as to save their longing ; and if their Muse miscarry, or come with an ugly Mark into the World, are rather to be pity'd than condemn'd. In what Pangs have I seen some poor  
Creatures



Creatures to be deliver'd, when at the same time they have fear'd the Poverty of their Brats, and that the World wou'd discover they were very sick in the breeding. A good Poet ought never to want a worthy Patron; and our Nobility and Gentry ought to be Industrious in the Advancement of Letters. They might do it with great ease and little Expence; for the Number is not so great who deserve their Countenance. In vain we complain of the Irregularity of the Stage, if they who cou'd support its Honour, want support themselves: So that one great Step to advance the Theatre, is to take care, that they who write for the Stage, do not want for Encouragement.

You see, Sir, I have given my Thoughts freely: I wish they may receive your Approbation; because I wou'd never think but to please you. I dare not now think of excusing any thing I have writ; for I was resolv'd to tie my self to no Method, but to think as much as I cou'd for the advantage of the Stage, which I must believe very lawful, for any thing I have yet met to the contrary. Nor can I be perswaded, that our Plays have had so ill effect as some wou'd imagine. The best of our Plays have nothing in them that is so scandalous; and for the worst, I wou'd not allow them the Credit, nor the Authors the Vanity to think they could influence any one Man. The evil Conversation of some of them wou'd frighten a Man from being vicious; so that they are serviceable against their Wills, and do the World a Kind-

not through mistake. I dare not say any longer with you; tho' I have a great Inclination to beg you'd excuse the roughness of my Style: But you know I have been busied in *Virgil*; and that they say, at *Will's*, is enough to spoil it: But if I had begg'd a more important thing, and ask'd you to forgive the length of my Letter, I might assure my self you would oblige,

Your Humble Servant,

FINIS

